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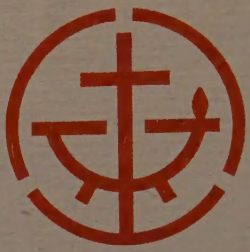

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MORAL ASPECTS OF THE EUROPEAN WAR

A Lecture delivered under the auspices of the Nucleu de Propaganda Pro-Alliados at the Academia de Estudos Livres on the 13th May, 1917, by HENRIQUE LOPES DE MENDONÇA, *Associate Academia das Sciencias de Lisboa*

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LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

Instead of the lecture I have so kindly been invited to deliver, I should have preferred to preach you a sermon on the text of the sacred words—*In terra pax hominibus!* On earth, peace, says the text, and it adds: *bonæ voluntatis*—good will toward men. That is to say, to those of good will, to right-minded men, to lovers of justice, to men who do not place their personal interests before the welfare of their country and of mankind. As to the others, these form a minority, insignificant in numbers but powerful throughout the world by the dissolvent power of their intrigue, their grasping egotism, their malevolent solidarity. I shall speak of them later on perhaps: that is to say, if time permits, and if my audience is disposed to listen.

The former, composing the great majority of crushed, impoverished, bereaved mortals, cast into grief and misery by the most tremendous war that history has ever witnessed, these are the men who

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interest me, who interest us all. It is their voice which speaks through the lips of the great statesmen of the belligerents, proclaiming their desire for peace, but an honourable peace, a lasting peace, a peace which shall free future generations from the anguish and tortures assigned by destiny to ours.

This brings me to the point of my sermon; but let us turn back a little. For sacred discourses I find myself lacking in the one essential thing, and perhaps the greater portion of my audience may be in like case—we have not the gift of faith! For want of it, the heart of many of us has for long been desolate and shrouded in gloom. This I deplore for my hearers as I do for myself. To live in a dream is still the most blissful, perhaps the only really happy form of existence on earth. And the dream of the supernatural is the supreme hope, for without hope the soul of man sinks into darkness. This it was which inspired Dante to record, over the gateway to his Inferno, the fateful legend:

Lasciate ogni speranza, ó voi che entrate.

And indeed, with an eternity of despair, no other torment was required to make a hell of Hell.

But let us desist from vain regrets. It is possible that the philosophic mission of Christianity may be on the point of vanishing from the world. Sincerely I hope not. But its social mission still survives, despite revolutions and cataclysms, as the source of all morality among the civilised nations of Europe and America. Be we devout, sceptical, or atheistic, we still remain saturated with its doctrine, and thus fail to conceive, outside the

domain of savagery, any society which does not revere its precepts. The ideals of justice on which all democratic legislation is based spring from the blood so unjustly shed on Calvary. The ideals of love, which kindle our hearts, take their rise from the sacred lips which proclaimed: "Love one another." The ideals of equality and fraternity, never yet attained, were from the same sublime source. Yet it is remarkable that those very revolutionaries who are the fiercest in their zeal for stripping Christ of His divine attributes should inscribe on their banner of social regeneration, in the name of Humanity, the identical words which epitomize the doctrine preached in the name of God.

Hence, Gentlemen, my conclusion is this: be our sentiments as regards religion what they may; be we believers or sceptics, mystics or atheists, in the depths of our souls we are all Christians—Christians from the moral standpoint, Christians in our mutual relations with the Godhead. Twenty centuries of Christianity have accumulated in our consciences a store of ethical sentiments which no storm will ever sweep out, unless we are prepared to revert to primitive savagery. Conceptions of honour, of duty, of respect for the rights of others, of charity towards the unfortunate, of pity for the oppressed, of horror for unjust violence, of hatred for tyranny, of execration for perfidy and crime: all these have become engrafted into our very being as essential principles, incontestable and indispensable to our social life. Without them we should lapse into the cavern-life of troglodytes, seizing with tooth and claw, with the knife and other

weapons of death, the bread we require to keep us from starvation.

True, the good seed of the Gospel has not yet expelled evil from the world. But in the human animal it has at least softened those instincts of rapine, the proximate or remoter source of all social conflagrations. War itself, the organic fatality of societies, from the time when Christ's word poured balm upon the soul of the warrior, has become less atrocious in its methods. In that long period of ten centuries known as the Middle Ages, when a northern barbarian came on the scene, flooding the lands of the sun in the hope of restraining the advance of the Græco-Roman civilisation, a gleam of hope filtered into the dungeons of the captives, a ray of pity flashed against the swords of the invaders. Faith, honour, adherence to the plighted word, respect for innocent and defenceless life, protection for the unjustly persecuted: all these notions of justice and dignity, which Roman law had formulated and Christ's apostles had acclaimed, found their way into a code tacitly accepted by all civilised peoples, even by those who, like the Mussulman, were themselves outside the pale of the Church. Such was the code of chivalry, which for centuries stood as the safeguard of millions of oppressed, the refuge of the weak, a shield against the tyranny of the strong, and a mitigation of the violence of armed savagery in war.

By this I do not mean, and it would be senseless to affirm, that, times without number, brute force did not gain the mastery over law and reason; that might was not the supreme arbiter of unbridled

ambition. But it is certain that brute force itself paid homage to justice by cloaking its misdeeds under moral pretexts more or less specious. It was in the name of Catholic faith that the Spanish conqueror slew the Indian, that his kings bathed Flanders in blood. It was under colour of a resistance to despotism that Napoleon I. undertook by force of arms to forge his own despotism upon Europe. And in the various wars of succession, the ambitions which crossed swords always invoked the protection of divine right, universally acknowledged as the source of monarchical power.

What I mean to say is that greed or wickedness invariably clothed itself in the guise of some sacred ideal, and at least in modern times—never till now—has it dared to affront the conscience of mankind by a cynical parade of its true intentions.

Never till now, I have said; never till yesterday, I ought to have said. For it was but yesterday, only three years ago, in the full daylight of civilisation, that a European nation struck the cultured world full in the face, proclaiming over all the globe the supremacy of might as the dogma of her moral culture. It was but yesterday, to the shame of civilisation, that the most admirable conquests of modern science, carefully turned to account during forty years of painstaking preparation, were brought into play to crush the weak, to surprise the unsuspecting, to trample under the brutal weight of her armies the most generous aspirations of the human soul—all this, according to the impenitent confession of her warriors and philosophers, with the sole

object of riveting upon the world at large the iron bondage of German rule.

History repeats itself. Some fifteen centuries before, Attila, king of the Huns, devastated all Europe, proclaiming that never again would grass grow where the hoofs of his steed had trod. Just in the same spirit German arrogance boasted itself that never again, in the regions swept by German cannon, would popular liberty be reborn. Over the whole world of old, with Attila, dark night came on. But mark the fateful coincidence: it was on the banks of the Marne, in the Catalaunian plains, that the defeat of the Hunnish hosts dispelled the fearsome gloom; and it was in the battle of the Marne that the first dawn of victory gleamed in our eyes. Let us be of good cheer: the same fate is in store for the modern Hun.

The modern Hun has to go under, if we so will it. Let us strengthen our will, not only against the transitory vicissitudes of war, but—note this well—against the persistent insinuations of peace. Yes! For almost half a century these influences, slowly infiltrating, have threatened to pervert our thought and deprave our conscience, just as they have succeeded in doing within the borders of Germany herself. For the present war is the explosion of deleterious forces which, sapping Germany, have brought her back to the first stage of normal civilisation. In attempting to establish the Teutonic hegemony of the world, those forces have shaken the foundations upon which human society rests; they have converted social life into a fierce struggle of

individual egoisms in perpetual revolt against the preponderant egoism.

The Germany of which I speak, please remember, is not the Germany which captured the admiration of thinkers, philosophers and artists. It is not the Germany which under the hand of Luther broke the fetters of religious intolerance, which illuminated human thought by the brilliant beacon of Kant, which through the sublime genius of Goethe shed its renovating rays over universal literature, which with Beethoven and Wagner brought fresh charm into the Divine Art. No! From the day when the most unprogressive of Germany's races, that race which to-day stands for the truculent energies of barbarism, hurled over her the chariots of its steel colossus, *that* Germany, great and mighty, sank into oblivion. The German nation (though blindly and unconsciously so) is to-day the victim of Prussian militarism. Aided by a tenaciously malevolent intelligence, the germs of that poison, spread ever since the eighteenth century at the instance of Frederick the Great, have been filtering into the organism of Germany, there to develop with intensity, above all since the war of 1871 placed the Imperial crown on the head of the King of Prussia. From that time onward the pest overflowed the frontiers and began to contaminate the whole world. To-day, and only to-day, has the consciousness of this infernal perversion of men's minds begun to be perceived, up to now accepted as it has been by the *snobism* of the world at large as if it were a salutary transformation.

Yes! Many of our contemporaries, and among them some of the best informed, have been reading

eagerly and assimilating with delight the Nietzschian doctrine that for those organisms endowed with an excess of energy, the so-called supermen, all mankind should make way. And this abominable doctrine, based on a sophistication of scientific principles, the negation of all morals and all justice, the consecration of violence and rapine, has been received without protest, nay even with sympathy, by minds rooted in Christianity, by social workers whose activities had for their motive force the deepest respect for the dignity of man.

But if the tares spread beyond the German borders, what wonder that they should have flourished within them, where an environment had been so assiduously prepared for their reception! The State, with singular astuteness, turned to its own ends, if it did not actively promote, the vagaries of genius so as to mould the German mentality. Nietzsche's monstrous theory was practically given a collective interpretation. The superman was expanded into the super-nationality. The professor and the soldier effectively collaborated with the philosopher in the work of moral perversion. Into the Germanic conscience was infused the mystic conviction that the German people was that chosen by the Deity to shepherd the human flock. The pride of moral and intellectual supremacy became engrained in the soul of the people, inspiring her claim to an indisputable dominion over all the races of the earth. She presented an amazing crisis of general megalomania, which the imminence of defeat has not yet cured, and her partial victories still foster. Of this fact there are abundant proofs, but want of

time and the character of this discourse forbid my enlarging upon them. Suffice it to mention, as the latest instance of this form of arrogance, the expression used last summer by Professor von Stengel, of the University of Munich. "The whole war up to now," his iron pen wrote, "has shown that Germany has been selected by Providence to guide all other nations. Let us march at the head of them, and we shall lead them to a permanent peace. For this mission we have the strength, and likewise the spiritual gifts, as we are the crown of all civilisation. . . . The whole world, and especially the neutral nations, have only one means of profitable existence, and that is to submit themselves to our direction, which is superior to all others from every point of view. No nation surpasses us in the widest and highest ideals and sentiments, and under our dominion none need concern himself as to the defence of his rights."

Be it specially noted: the words I have just recited were penned in cold blood, inside the walls of a German University, by a man whose brain was saturated with science, at the very period when two years of war-pressure at the hands of the Allies had begun to make itself cruelly felt within the borders of Germany. Yet this document unmistakably manifests the ambition of universal dominion, its threats not even sparing the neutral Powers. It portrays in gloomy perspective a future for humanity under the iron-shod jack-boot of the Teuton.

Should not the universal conscience, that of the whole civilised world, be it inspired by Christ or

Muhammad, by Buddha or by the goddess of Reason, combine in revolt against this formidable hypertrophy of national egoism? With all sincerity I confess it: in the midst of this tremendous conflagration, what most alarms one, the epidemic of war-madness in Germany synchronising with a world-wide blindness elsewhere, is that Germany should have allies at all, and that a single neutral should continue to exist in the world. When, with an effrontery such as this, a whole people forsakes its rudimentary moral sense, boasting its own brute force as the sole sanction of its boundless pride, we feel we are confronted with a pack of ravening wolves. These it behoves us to hunt down with all our available energies, unless we all, every man among us, mankind in the mass, are willing to be torn to pieces by their death-dealing fangs.

To hunt them down, yes! To destroy them utterly, no! This would neither be practicable, nor humane, nor yet beneficial. Our vision is one of a reconstituted Germany, relieved of Prussian militarism, dedicated to her own prolific task of peace and science, unoppressed by the horrid nightmare of which her only record is a universal hatred. Freed from the illusive fumes of vainglory, her eyes fixed on the supreme ideal of liberty, her robust hands wielding the instruments of honest toil, her powerful brain applied to invention, a Germany such as we portray would be a potent lever of incalculable value towards human progress. During long years of apparent prosperity, though the latent

virus was mining her organism, she showed the world the greatness of her genius, the pertinacity of her toil, the excellence of her manufactures. She contributed largely to the material comfort of mankind, rendering life easier and more joyous, and giving the poor a share in that luxury which used to be the monopoly of the rich. It may have been that to this end this unfortunate people was ignorantly sacrificing its old ideals of dignity, burning on the altars of despotism the last remnants of its democratic pride. But however great her services to us may have been, the price she demanded from us in return was out of all proportion. It was an ignoble serfdom, this transformation of free men into a gang of convicts, toiling on the endless task of filling their coffers. The first onslaughts of hunger should have led them to see the senselessness of such an aspiration.

What a pity that to this distracted people, the progenitor of heroes and geniuses, so cruel a disillusionment as this should alone have remained! But, should it open her eyes to her true position, she may be able later on to say, having regained full possession of her senses, that it was not she who was defeated, but the ancestral forces which overwhelmed her from within, the atavic eruption of barbarism bursting through the noble sentiments acquired by her as the work of many centuries of civilisation. That formidable outburst over, she will have been released by the hands which, when fighting her, were purifying her from the malign ferment which has poisoned her culture—a culture of which she was so proud, yet one which only attains its

true fecundity when the rays of the Latin sun are allowed free play upon it.

For half a century the Germanic genius, shrouded in a mantle of pride, has sought to withdraw itself from those vivifying rays. The result is what we are now witnessing. Given up entirely to herself, Germany has by insensible transitions been sliding down the declivity into barbarism. Kept going by her undeniable internal energy, her products have been colossal, but monstrous; flourishing, but aberrant. A depraved philosophy: a brutalised art. In applied science alone, served by an admirably methodical mind, and on the utilitarian side of civilisation alone, thanks to an astounding tenacity, has German genius during that period earned an indisputable title to the gratitude of mankind.

But it is equally certain that this very savagery of greatness in her conceptions has blinded her. I have already referred in passing to the fatal influence of German philosophy. That influence has not restricted itself to the limited orbit of those thinkers who alone possess the brains capable of the laborious assimilation of such metaphysical dainties. Lamentable though it may be, it would not be altogether an evil had they, sequestered in their own lazarettos, refrained from contaminating society at large. But around the thinkers there hover the restless, petulant multitude, the chattering, pervading army of snobs, and it is they who are the transmitters and the propagators of the virus. Filtered through this layer, those philosophical principles change their form, either crystallising into dogmatic aphorisms or diffusing themselves in

subtle emanations which spread throughout the whole body social. Often even the most beneficent of them, by excessive concentration, assume deleterious properties: what then of those which, as in the present instance, are by their nature dissolvent?

In this way the pernicious principle of the supremacy of force over right, elevated into a body of moral doctrine, the inspiring idea of the Nietzschian philosophy, has been worked to its full extent so as to arouse into mischievous activity the savage instincts slumbering in the minds of the many. Recourse to violence, intolerance of control, the rebellion of the ruled, exacerbations of the egoistic passions, refusal to yield where interests conflict, all emerge as the fatal and ultimate consequences towards which we have long been ignorantly drifting. And indeed many minds at present hostile to Germanism have nevertheless become tainted by it. Everywhere idealistic tendencies are carped at, humane precepts ridiculed, disinterestedness scorned, the struggle for life accentuated. Our old romantic ideals are tied up into bundles and slightingly labelled "sentimentalism." And this spirit of disdain, which in the individual lets loose the evil passions, has its inevitable reflection in international life. Among private individuals, as among nations, material interest is assigned as the sole possible motive for every act. Legal formulæ become a deceptive cloak for the claims of the weak, and the strong may tear them up or remodel them according to their own sweet will. And the majority of minds, imbued with this sinister teaching, fail to perceive, in their impulsive indignation, that the

synthesis of it is to be found in the old Jesuitical maxim, adopted by the German Chancellor, "The end justifies the means."

A curious thing! The Germanic spirit, prone to expansiveness like all its earlier contemporaries, used to indulge from the first in the most exaggerated flights of romantic idealism. We have a familiar instance of the kind in the youthful creation of Goethe—Werther. Remember how he could find no other means of ridding his brain of a criminal passion than by shattering it with a pistol-shot. The vogue created by this romance became so extraordinary throughout Germany that imitators arose on all sides. An epidemic of passional suicide ran through the nation. Goethe had to hasten to check it, and succeeded in doing so by cauterising the evil he himself had created, in his later work, "The Basis of Sentimentalism."

And now, a century and a half later, the torrent of German materialism and overweening self-adulation has not merely subverted the exaggerated sentimentalism of the ultra-romantic school, but has stripped off the foliage and withered the flower of romance which gave the human soul its only perfume. It has thus destroyed the only check upon the corrosive influence of egoistic passion, the only restraint upon savagery and crime. And this time there is not the slightest hope that the disseminators of the pestilence will repent and provide the remedy for the evil they have wrought.

My audience will note how dark a future would be reserved for mankind had chance not opposed a barrier to this devastating torrent, and, after it had

been dammed back, had some germs of good, deposited by the flood, not been left in the world.

But, as the apothegm of the old Roman poet hath it: "*Quem Jupiter vult perdere, dementat prius.*" It was thus that Germany, materially prosperous, aggrandised from the worldly standpoint, allowed herself to be deceived so far as to attempt a gigantic and decisive blow towards making good her own monstrous megalomania. The blow was prematurely delivered. The world had not yet been sufficiently sapped by the corruption previously spread abroad. It was still but a minority of thoughtless persons who, impelled by a craving for the new and the extravagant, by the deplorable obsession of political passion or of despicable interests, received and welcomed the advent of the movement. The others, the well-meaning, not entirely contaminated by the virus, had their eyes opened in time to the menace as revealed in the crushing of innocent populations, in the vandalistic destruction of revered monuments, in terror glorified as the true system of warfare, in unscrupulous rapine, in slaughter without pity, in ferocity without limits. Taken thus by surprise, the nations armed themselves to resist the barbarians. They saw, emerging from the sea, the agonised arms of the victims of the *Lusitania*. The cries of the starving, the captives led into slavery, the slaughtered, cries from Belgium, from France, from Serbia, filled the air. A drop of the heroic blood of Edith Cavell entered all honest hearts as a burning incentive to vengeance.

But I need not recapitulate the dreadful tragedy which for the last three years has been bathing the

world in blood. I am no politician, so it is in its moral aspect alone that I justify the lawfulness—nay, more, the bounden duty—of resistance at all hazards to the arrogant ambitions of Germany, to the fatal corruption which her hegemony would diffuse among us, to the infamies with which she has stained the pages of history.

The world's moral conscience has at last revolted in an unmistakable form. No more eloquent condemnation of *welt-politik* as interpreted by the Central Empires exists than is furnished by the famous message of President Wilson to the American Senate. He is blind who does not see in that document the synthesis of the cries for justice, for that national liberty which a Prussian kick would hurl into the abyss; it demands that these things be secured for all time.

I am not unaware, Gentlemen, that the message to which I have just referred has given rise to controversy among the Allies themselves. But, much as I respect all expression of genuine opinion, and gather from it elements for the formation of my own, I have a way of thinking, rightly or wrongly, which is that of my own brain, and not of others. My motto is that of de Musset:

Mon verre n'est pas grand, mais je bois dans mon verre.

Thus let me show you briefly the wine I have in my cup—a wine which may be different to-morrow should good reason be forthcoming for altering or improving upon it. For, among the few qualities in

respect of which I believe myself to diverge from the national character, I claim to be neither impulsive nor unyielding—characteristics which to my mind seem too German not to be worth a serious effort to eradicate them from our psychology.

Throughout the world to-day there is no one of good faith who is not standing at the window watching anxiously for the coming of the white dove with the symbolic olive-branch. But let not our vision be deceived. Let not the plumage coloured by the rays of the dawn disguise the hue of blood, or the foliage of the hangman's oak be mistaken for that of the olive. Yet this is precisely the device to be feared should perchance the dove come from the aviaries of the Kaiser, the hatching-ground of all the perfidies and lies that for half a century back have been flying round the political horizons of Europe. We all know to-day how the falsification of the celebrated telegram of Ems was the origin of the Franco-Prussian War of 1870. And we have now seen how Germany tore up the treaty which imposed upon her respect for the neutrality of Belgium, and the conventions of The Hague which aimed at attenuating the cruelties of war; how she induced Greece to betray Serbia, her ally. To look to her, then, to honour her own signature to a treaty of peace, so long as the instruments which can still serve her boundless ambitions remain unbroken in her hands, would be a form of madness only comparable in imbecility to that of the guileless creature who would commit his money and his life to an armed bandit, trusting to the bandit's word of honour. No matter how intense the desire for

peace, the Allies must refuse to treat for it with so perfidious an enemy, who dares to propose it while in the same breath boasting himself victorious. Much more so that the moment has now arrived when their resources, tardily assembled, justify them in the hope of manacling the enemy in a very short space of time. A bargain concluded under such conditions as these can be little else than a mere truce, permitting the foe to collect himself and prepare for a new and more terrible onslaught than before. The transaction would be inspired by a desire not altogether unlike the egoistic wish to postpone the payment of a debt, although well aware that it would only stand overloaded with accumulated interest so as to crush our heirs and successors.

It was in this spirit that the Allies replied to the humane intervention of President Wilson with a frank exposition of their aims. The Central Empires dared not indulge in a similar outspokenness. The arrogant and cynical frankness that is theirs is only for use when they believe themselves certain of victory. When uncertain they hide their claws, but woe betide him who trusts to the velvet paw thus shown him!

Still the President of the great transatlantic Republic did not relax his efforts. He waited, serene and pertinacious, until the ideals of justice embodied in his noble message should have penetrated deep into the American conscience. The practical politician may perhaps disdain the document as one of platonic idealism. I, however, in my quality of unyielding idealist, salute it as the most admirable manifesto of international law as yet

issued by the chief of any State. I salute it as, in its own phraseology, "the voice of the silent mass of humanity, which as yet has not had the time or the opportunity of making known what is passing in its heart with regard to the death and the ruin befalling the persons and the homes most dear to it." I salute it as the most solemn condemnation of that despotism which, under the mask of political equilibrium, would trample whole nations underfoot. I salute it as translating the most generous aspirations for national liberty which the mind of a statesman can conceive.

It would be superfluous to analyse further this magnificent document. It will take its place in History as the most radiant escutcheon of glory for the great nation which conceived it. Let me confine myself to the enumeration of its essential characteristics: peace without victory, a peace which will not be a ferment of persistent hatreds; the right of peoples to group themselves under governments fulfilling their own ideals; the equality of nations before the common law, irrespective of nice distinctions as to the greater and the smaller nations; the organisation of an international force so powerful as to impose its will on any combination for perturbing the common peace; the freedom of the seas; access guaranteed to them for the legitimate expansion of all; limitation of armaments; the free action of every people in the direction of their own policy, exempt from threats and overlordship.

Who can in good faith refuse his enthusiastic applause to this programme of world-wide

confraternity? It may be that much that it contains is unrealisable, at least in the near future. But even in this world of ambitions and miseries the germs which fall will not be sterile. It will certainly be necessary for their fructification that the so-called Great Powers, those of both the belligerent factions, shall resign themselves to immediate sacrifices and to mutual compromises. Still, a rapid scrutiny of the map of Europe will show that the claims of justice will be chiefly felt by our enemies. Alsace-Lorraine, which in the course of forty-four years German militarism has failed to Prussianise, will return to the fond bosom of France. Poland will be freed from the tense bonds holding her to Russia, Prussia, and Austria. The Czechs will demand the restoration of their ancient kingdom of Bohemia. The Slav, Italian, Croat, and Slovene populations, now conglomerated in the mosaic pompously styled the Apostolic Empire, will revert to their respective folds. And in this way will be broken up that decorated casket of Pandora from which for ages, to the undoing of mankind, have emerged the mephitic gases of war.

Now you can see, Gentlemen, why the message of President Wilson, transformed into a diplomatic instrument, should prove inharmonious during this anachronistic fury of despotism raging so terribly over Central Europe. We, however, who prize above all things liberty and justice, cannot fail to receive it as the basis of a future and welcome code, universally accepted by civilised nations, under which international affairs will be governed. We salute it as the dawn of a hopeful day, through the heavy

clouds still venting their fury upon us. We welcome our troubles, we rejoice in our sacrifices, so long as we know that our children and grandchildren shall warm themselves in the splendid sunshine which these slender rays foretell for us.

But that we may accept these sacrifices without reluctance, it behoves us that they be equitably apportioned. And this brings me to the topic which President Wilson seems to have overlooked. I am now trying to keep the promise I gave at the beginning of my discourse. But as the subject is a delicate one, and I am perhaps the first to broach it, I propose to resort to a mythological parable which will be easily intelligible to those who can, and will, understand my meaning.

Olympus of the Greeks and Romans is an inexhaustible repertory of symbols, and from it I propose to draw my materials.

First of all, let me present to you Mars, the god of war—a stupid deity, whose strength would be of no avail had chance not brought Minerva, the goddess of wisdom, to aid him. It was she who trained his muscles and improved his weapons. Here we have him, brave and ready for the fray, but so clownish that he lets himself be caught in a net by the jealous Vulcan, at the moment when robbing the latter of the conjugal caresses of the fair and beauteous Venus. So stupid is he that this issue is not settled in favour of the stronger. It is then that the astute Mercury comes to his aid. You know him?—the gentleman with wings on his heels and helmet, who carries a winged staff with a pair

of serpents curled round it—his caduceus. If you have not seen him, you must have heard him flying round the market places, the counters of the banks, and the offices of the merchants. Such is Mercury.

Now Mercury, the amiable, insinuating and jealous, whispers things into the asinine ear of Mars, and to such good purpose that the clown at once places himself at his service. Thenceforward Mars goes round the world, aided by Minerva, inspirer of the discovery of all harmful things, from the monk Schwartz, who invented gunpowder, down to the manufacturer Krupp, who makes 42 cm. guns, and harnessed to Mercury, who pulls the strings. So, behind this fearsome automaton, making use of the terrors he inspires, moving his arms and legs at will, wrinkling his brow, shooting boasts from his lips and fire from his eyes, Mercury goes on governing the world. He it is who directs the pen of the diplomatist and places himself at the elbow of the statesman. Governments, autocratic, parliamentary, or democratic, bow the knee before his omnipotent caduceus. With the lever of monopolies and syndicates, the cunning deity has succeeded in setting up the famous law of supply and demand by which to strangle nine-tenths of the human race. Its high priests, gambling with national jealousies, make their own understandings with one another all round the world, from Hamburg to New York, from London to Tokio, from Paris to Melbourne, from Vienna to Pekin, ready to make peace or war as the interests of their cult may dictate. Should a conflagration break out, the blood shed but serves to

give a greater brilliancy to the gilding of the caduceus, the flames to melt the metal which will improve it.

One might think that Mercury, in spite of all his astuteness, may sometimes deceive himself and fail to measure correctly the consequences of the moves he makes on the great chess-board of the world, with its potentates as his pawns. But he never loses. He always has the knack of turning the misfortune of others to his own advantage. Every hungry belly to him represents more nuggets of gold to be garnered in with eagerness; every mourning, some more yards of crape to be supplied by him at a good price; every cannon-ball, so many more pounds of steel to be turned into the gold which rings true. And in this way he is cunning enough to compensate himself copiously, excessively, for all the sacrifices he pretends to make for love of countries he does not even know, out of dedication to ideals that to him are but so many empty labels.

Ah, good Mercury! honest Mercury! sparkling Mercury! As it is in the nature of things that you must govern the world, when may we expect you to acquire at least so much of a conscience as may serve you by way of mariner's compass?

Wilson failed to mention this, perhaps the most powerful of all the agents of war. I am not surprised. He would not be the chief of a State were he not to pay homage to the divine caduceus. But in the end, from the resolute attitude he has now assumed, it seems certain that the desires of Mercury this

time are in accordance with those of well-intentioned men. Peace is the universal aspiration. But between good and evil, peace cannot exist for long unless evil submits itself, unless the noxious ferments are destroyed. And whatever may be the sophisms engendered by Germany and welcomed by a world of evil-disposed and blind, it is indubitable that her enemies are on the side of right.

Thus it is, Gentlemen, that I excuse myself from appealing to the material interests affected, or from employing arguments drawn from politics, when I seek to justify the armed intervention of the civilised world against the powerful empire which hopes to drag it back into barbarism. In the name of all the moral principles buffeted and trampled underfoot, of the evangelical culture which has tamed the human beast, of the justice preached on the Cross and revindicated in the fires of the Holy Office and on the scaffolds of the Revolution, of the consciences affronted by the infamies of a despotic militarism, of the rights spat upon by the Teuton, I claim this war to be a sacred one. And to sanction the solidarity of movement of all the peoples against the ambitions of Germany, it does not occur to me to invoke a more adequate text than that which a great German has himself furnished. The words I would quote are those of Schiller: "Let no free country be alien to the freedom of another country."

Assuredly, when, more than a century ago, Schiller put these words into the mouth of one of his characters, he little foresaw that his own country would take its stand as the systematic persecutor of popular liberty. His generous spirit did not dream

that the moral sense of his fellow-countrymen would become perverted to the extent of preaching force as the one and only source of right, violence against the weak as the duty of the strong, espionage as the basis of civic education, sack and extermination as legitimate means of gain, fetters imposed on men for the benefit of, and under the lash of, supermen, human life itself as a benevolent concession of the Kaiser. The religious soul of Schiller could not have anticipated that the old northern divinity Thor, the lord of war, would reincarnate himself in that arrogant potentate, proclaiming to the four winds of heaven the supremacy of terror and the inanity of all Christian morality.

But to-day, as a reply to that execrated doctrine, there is the human aphorism of the great dramatist which deserves to be inscribed on the common banner of the Allies: "Let no free country be alien to the freedom of another country."

Portugal is going solemnly to affirm on the field of battle her adhesion to this precept, though uttered by German lips. In defence of it, Portuguese will fight side by side with Englishmen, as they fought with them at Aljubarrota, side by side with Frenchmen, who fought with them at Montes Claros. Were it necessary to appeal to a motive less disinterested than the noble ideal proclaimed by Schiller, we have this: the payment of an ancient debt, to which our honour binds us. Let us go forward to defend territories of those who defended ours; let us maintain the independence of nations who contributed to the salvation of our own independence.

But the objective is a higher one, I repeat. This has been made quite clear within the last few months, through the revolution in Russia, the participation of the United States, and the solidarity, more or less effective, of all the democracies. It is the peoples' struggle for right, for liberty, for civilisation against the dark forces of despotism and barbarism. Portugal would betray her historic mission were she now to fold her arms, the arms which discovered worlds. When the earth was given to man, it was not that it should be peopled by slaves. The sails of Portuguese ships surrounded the globe like a diadem of stars, not as a collar of darkness to strangle it.

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